

symptoms of its being put to the vote began to appear, when in walked several members of the committee, who had never attended before. It was put to the vote, when, to the surprise of those gentlemen who had devoted some little time to the subject, the new-comers commenced voting for and carried the adoption of one of those which had been put aside! This was pretty well. But all is not yet told. The committee, anxious to be impartial, issued strict orders in their instructions that each design should have a mysterious motto accompanied by a sealed letter (mark how careful they were! A wafered or adhesive envelope might have betrayed the secret); and yet when they came to the vote upon the three plans, they did not vote, as you would of course imagine, "for the plan bearing the motto" so and so, but actually voted by name for the three different architects whose productions they were! Yes, Sir, not ashamed of this, they each wrote down their particular protégé's name on a piece of paper and handed it in. Here is glorious secrecy! Another curious feature was, that all these plans were by Ipswich architects, although, as I said before, I know that some gentlemen of good standing in London were foolish enough to be competitors.

The chosen plan, the production of a Mr. Woolrough, as stated in your last week's publication, they find, cannot be executed for less than 6,000*l.*, although strict instructions were given that it was not to exceed 3,000*l.*, or just half that sum. The committee are consequently in a great fix, and scarcely know how to proceed. They have, however, I understand, hit upon an expedient of extricating themselves which is only equalled by their previous immaculate transactions. Another competitor, who sent in a design which he openly stated could not be erected for less than 5,000*l.*, has been allowed to withdraw his plans, or, at any rate, to send in a fresh design—after letting him inspect all the other fifty-one. This gentleman (who, by-the-by, was the successful competitor in the five-guinea institution) is, I believe, therefore to submit his revised plan next Saturday to the committee.

These facts speak for themselves, and therefore require no comment. I have heard that a London architect has placed the matter in the hands of a solicitor. If this is true, I sincerely trust he will make these Ipswich gentlemen pay for their whistle: it is high time something of the sort was done.

ENGINEERING WORKS IN IRELAND.

THE directors of the Dublin and Belfast Junction Railway Company have advertised for tenders for the erection of a viaduct over the river Boyne, together with other works between the temporary station at Newfoundwell and near to the terminus of the Dublin and Drogheda Railway. The total length of work to be contracted for will be about 3,950 feet. The railway will be carried over the river, at a height of 100 feet, on a lattice bridge of three bays, resting on stone piers about 15 feet wide at plinth; the centre bay is 150 feet wide, and the other two 125 feet each; it then extends on fourteen arches, of semicircular form, each 60 feet span, and resting on piers 33 feet 6 inches by 12 feet at plinth, and 31 feet 6 inches by 8 feet 6 inches at springing, the arches to have architraves; internal spandril walls to be six in number and 15 inches thick, covered with flagging, a packing of dry rubble to be behind the abutments. The viaduct is to be set out from the wall north of the Beauhieu-road. The pier being 4 feet south of it at the top of plinth; height to springing of arches 55 feet. The Newfoundwell viaduct consists of five arches 60 feet span, and in every respect similar to those above described. The masonry to be of limestone.

The Commissioners of National Education propose erecting a model agricultural school at Terrose, in the county Limerick, according to plans by their architect, and have advertised for tenders for same.

The entire of the works on the Cork and Passage Railway are nearly complete. Some masonry at the Quay wall at Passage, and the masonry behind it is being finished; but the entire will be complete in about a month. Sir John McNeill is the engineer.

A Bill will be applied for next session to make a railway from the Ulster Railway, at Armagh, to the Ulster Canal, at the town of Caledon. Mr. Dargan, who is now almost the sole proprietor of the canal, is the promoter of the railway; and the works will be prosecuted at his own expense. The distance is seven statute miles.

The Waterford, Wexford, Wicklow, and Dublin Railway Company have publicly expressed their intention of applying to Parliament next session to alter and reduce their capital, to authorise the cancelling of shares not issued, to issue new ones, and to arrange for the division of the share capital, to reduce the number of the directors, alter the title of company, and abandon the proposed line between the point of junction of the main line with the diverging line at Wicklow, at the seventh furlong of the twenty-ninth mile.

It is said that the University of Dublin are about to spend 30,000*l.* or 40,000*l.* for the erection of buildings connected with Trinity College.

Dr. Cullen lately convened a meeting of the building committee of Armagh Roman Catholic Cathedral for the purpose of making arrangements for resuming, at an early period, the works commenced by the late Primate Crolly. Subscription lists are opened for this purpose.

The town council of Belfast have forwarded plans, and estimates received, for the erection of a new custom-house there, to the Lords of the Treasury for their approval.

A new front, and other works, are about being erected at the Mansion-house, Dublin, to render the building suitable for the incoming Lord Mayor. Plans for same were prepared by Mr. Hugh Byrne, City Architect, who is now receiving tenders for the execution of the works.

THE MARBLE ARCH AT CUMBERLAND GATE.

AT length the question of location for the Marble Arch has been decided, and this angle of Hyde-park has been fixed on by authority for its re-erection: excavations and hacking have been begun, and a brick and mortar office has been erected, to make a permanent and quiet layer within an extensive board, for leisurely operations, such as may be observed within the encircle of all public works, from Buckingham-palace to Nelson's Column.

Several sites have been submitted through THE BUILDER, more appropriate than Cumberland-corner: "one at the end of the long walk in Regent's-park, on the highest point of elevation, showing from Portland-place the back-ground of Highgate-hill; another, as illustrated about two months back, forming an opening into St. James's-park from Charing-cross; a third at the end of Pall-mall, at or near the proposed junction of that thoroughfare with the Green-park. Any of these would be preferable to the position selected by the Chief Commissioner on the way-side at the top of Oxford-street,—a spot chosen certainly not from any aptitude to the exhibition of any structure of fair proportion; for close on two sides bastions of very lofty and not very modern houses (though of the first class) form a screen on one side, and not a very pleasing back-ground on the other.

In that situation the Arch will not stand, as it ought, across the course of a great causeway, nor will it be in a line with Cumberland-place; but it jars with every recognised rule of architecture, save only the practice of the Latins, who placed their *tambs*, as at Pompeii, on the road-side! The *Arc de Triomphe* at Paris gives a fair idea of the proper position; here the noble arch occupies the highest eminence at the extreme of the majestic avenue of the *Champs Elysées*, and, as viewed from the Tuileries, forms a most imposing *coup d'œil*. Foreigners must admire our amazing proneness to misplace fine structures: in the nascent year of Exhibition, what shrugs and reflections will the unhappy *discalocation* of sumptuous performances in art not occasion?

The figure of a colossal equestrian statue above the chimneys on one corner, may excite the apostrophe, "Voilà la Sculpture Anglaise!" At the other cunning corner a hoard, enclosing (and likely for two years more to enclose) some

fifty workmen hammering at marble blocks, will surely be (in the absence of a commissionaire) designated "L'Exposition d'Industrie à l'Anglaise;"—then the unhappy swamp whereon is placed, *hors de rue*, the stupendous and elaborate Parliamentary Palace of Westminster! while, spite of the fountains and Trafalgar, foreigners will be tempted, when near Trafalgar-square, to jeer at our regardlessness of the finest opportunity for a grand foundation.

There are, however, other considerations which should sway those in power (or office) in choosing sites for colossal monuments such as the Marble Arch,—not only the appositeness of the locality to the erection, but of the erection to the locality. It is no light thing to obscure, darken, and prejudice right or ten first-class houses by the obstruction of a barrier, 50 feet wide by 60 in height. With reference to the Duke of Sutherland's, or Lord Ellesmere's, this point would have been considered; then why not as relates to ten mansions of private gentlemen?

But it is time that competency and taste should step in to avert further spoliation and frivolity in public matters such as the allocation of public works, and that men whose education and practice fit them to judge in the like cases should be *commissioned* to determine, when men take upon them to act whose only qualification for the office they too often abuse is just that amount of parliamentary or family interest which can procure an admission to place and 2,000*l.* a year—so far as the toilet such a one may be installed the "Arbiter Elegantiarum," but as to discrimination in properties for great and lasting monuments, they might as well attempt as no doubt they would undertake it) the construction of another Menai Bridge.

QUODAM.

THE CLOISTERS OF WESTMINSTER.

ALLOW me, through your columns, to make a few suggestions relative to the preservation of the Cloisters of Westminster Abbey, which I am sorry to see allowed to remain so sadly out of repair. Would it not be advisable, now that plate glass is so exceedingly cheap, to fill the tracery of the bays, and so exclude the damp atmosphere; this would effectually prevent the decomposition of the gilded ceilings and would also make it a fit receptacle for monuments, also enabling the Abbey authorities to clear out many of those now contained within the interior of the sacred edifice, which are totally devoid of interest to the present generation, and at best were but ostentatious displays of some worldly-minded capitalists. If this were done, and the incrustations and disintegrations removed from the present internal portion of the cloister, it would be far less likely to decay, as its present rough surface is like a sponge, holding the moisture, and every hour adding to the decomposition of the structure.

Perhaps, if parties so desirous were allowed to erect several windows in stained glass, as fittings for the tracery divisions of the bays, it would not only add to the effect, but would be a good start in the right direction, viz. in encouraging the manufacture of that article; this would apply to the present bare windows of St. Paul's and the interior of the Abbey, as it would, if permitted, soon be responded to by the public, and prove the value they placed upon the privilege. With one more remark, I conclude for the present. Surely something more suitable, and less likely to decay, could have been substituted for the iron bars cased in tin, and strengtheners to the mullions, and also to the columns within the Abbey. Copper or galvanised iron, in my opinion, would have been preferable, for many evident reasons: one glance at those in use would be enough to satisfy the most dubious."

H. B.

THE LATE MR. COITINGHAM'S MUSEUM OF MEDIEVAL ARCHITECTURE.—A catalogue of this museum, to which we have before drawn attention, has been issued by Mr. Henry Shaw, with fourteen or fifteen illustrations. From this we learn that, in the event of the collection not being disposed of by private contract, it will be sold by auction by Messrs. Foster in April next. The dispersion of this collection would be matter for lasting regret.

* This also was suggested by one of your correspondents.

* Should they be there at all?